

**Press Statement after Meeting with President Nkurunziza
October 3, 2011**

**By Maria Otero
Under Secretary for Democracy and Global Affairs**

Thank you for your very warm welcome.

I am happy to be in Burundi even if it is only for a short time and had a constructive meeting with the President Nkurunziza. We discussed our broad and expanding partnership with Burundi and, in particular, our common interests in ensuring that Burundi's post-conflict transformation is peaceful and democratic and that the people of Burundi reap the socio-economic "peace dividend" they so deserve.

We offer our condolences to the families of the victims of the incident in Gatumba last month. We join with the people of Burundi in expressing our concern about the increasing level of violence in Burundi, both criminal and political. We welcome the Government's commitment to investigate not only the killing at Gatumba but also the several dozen cases of extra-judicial killings documented over the past year by reputable international organizations. We urge that these investigations be conducted promptly and impartially, in line with international human rights standards, and ensure that the perpetrators are brought to justice.

We encourage the Government and the non-parliamentary political parties to engage in a national dialogue on issues of national importance, to avoid any further provocations that might escalate tension and violence, and to refrain from reprisal attacks. It is important that all political parties and actors recognize the legitimacy of the duly-elected parliament and president and work together to rebuild Burundi.

With regard to specific concerns about trafficking in persons: No person deserves to be trafficked. No one has the right to hold someone and force them to work. Trafficking is a global issue. We urge the Government to ratify the Palermo Trafficking in Persons Protocol and to pass specific anti-trafficking legislation so that every man, woman and child is legally protected and that those who engage in trafficking are brought to justice.